

AAC Non-traditional Student Survey

Survey Findings and Recommendations
March 1, 2010

REASONS FOR SURVEY

- Non-traditional students have an increased visibility at the AAC.
- These students often require different resources and support services.
- Faculty have made requests for more comprehensive services for non-trads at AAC.
- Faculty have expressed concern about non-traditional students' academic preparedness.

SURVEY GOALS

- To begin to assess non-traditional students' needs
- To acknowledge these students' presence on campus and invite their input into their educational goals and outcomes
- To provide more and better services to and for non-traditional students
- To educate administration and faculty about non-traditional student characteristics and learning preferences

Survey Instrument

- Internal needs assessment
- Web-based via email
- All Lawrence Tech students 25 or older (1,506)
- Anonymous
- 15 questions
- 2 weeks

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AAC
Academic Achievement Center

Dear Student,

In an effort to better meet the needs of the non-traditional student population at Lawrence Tech, the Academic Achievement Center is conducting a survey to assess program services. You are invited to share feedback about your experience as a non-traditional student at Lawrence Tech.

Your responses will provide program leaders with insights about the aspects of your experiences that are most important to you, how satisfied you are with these experiences, and how program leaders can better meet your needs. All responses (including name and email address) are optional and will be kept confidential.

Thank you for your participation.

Email Address

First Name Last Name

A non-traditional student can be defined in many ways, including the following. Please check all that apply to you:

- Returning to college after 4+ years away
- 25 years or older
- Delayed enrollment due to career
- Delayed enrollment due to military service
- Delayed enrollment due to family concerns
- Single parent
- Family responsibilities
- GED or did not complete high school
- Work full time (30+ hours per week)
- Financially independent of parents
- Other (explain below)

Please check the programs in which you are currently participating:

- Recovery Grant
- No Worker Left Behind
- Military Tuition Discount

RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS

- 158 responses (11% response rate)
- 65% (101) undergraduate
- 35% (54) graduate/non-matriculated/other
- 45 receive Recovery Grant
- 25 receive No Worker Left Behind
- 69% take primarily evening courses
- Nearly 75% of responders live 11 or more miles from campus
- 86% of responders are neutral, somewhat satisfied, or very satisfied with their Lawrence Tech experience

DEFINITIONS OF NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS IN COLLEGE

By using one or a combination of the criteria at right, the National Center for Educational Statistics estimates that over 60 percent of students in U.S. higher education can be characterized as non-traditional (U.S. Dept. of Education, 2001)

- ⦿ 25 or older (147)
- ⦿ Returning to college after 4+ years (70)
- ⦿ Delayed enrollment due to:
 - > Career(42)
 - > Financial concerns
 - > Military service (11)
 - > Family obligations (24)
- ⦿ Single parent (17)
- ⦿ Family obligations (67)
- ⦿ Financially independent (95)
- ⦿ GED/did not complete high school (5)
- ⦿ Working full time (30+ hpw) (67)
- ⦿ Attend classes part-time

KEY FINDINGS

- Non-traditional students would like
 - > greater access to campus resources
 - > a larger selection of course offerings
 - > consistent faculty use of Blackboard
 - > an on-campus orientation at the beginning of the semester
 - > adult networking events
 - > career planning opportunities
 - > greater academic support, particularly with technology, math, and academic citation
 - > a non-trad lounge with amenities
 - > overnight accommodation options.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- ◉ Later hours for campus departments one day or more per week
 - > AAC, One-Stop, bookstore, library
- ◉ Orientation/transition to college program
- ◉ Designate section of USEM and LDR2000 for non-trad enrollment only
- ◉ AAC review workshops for math, chemistry, physics, writing & citation
- ◉ Technology drop-in workshops (E-learning services or dept. specific)
- ◉ Non-trad student organization
- ◉ Greater visibility of, and more services offered by, commuter services office

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Fee-based short-term housing option
- Consistent Blackboard use
- Career services workshop series on career planning/transitioning
- Professional organizations for non-trads
- Development of an office of adult learning
- Non-traditional student lounge space with amenities for commuters
- Co-op childcare on campus
- Incentive for participation in future data-collection efforts

IMPLEMENTATION

- ◉ AAC will stay open until 9 p.m. one night per week this semester
 - > Several workshops offered evenings
- ◉ Non-traditional student web page created under AAC main
- ◉ Survey results and report posted at AAC website
- ◉ FYP hiring one non-trad as a FY mentor for 10/11 academic year
- ◉ Non-traditional women in architecture student group in development

Adult learners are the largest and most rapidly growing segment of U.S. postsecondary education.

Prioritizing services for non-traditional students results in their retention and increased involvement in campus life. This translates to stronger future alumni support and ties to the community for the institution.

References

What We Know About Adult Learners. Lumina Foundation. Accessed 1 March 2010 at <http://www.luminafoundation.org>

Serving Adult Learners in Higher Education: Principles of Effectiveness. The Council for Adult and Experiential Learning. (2005) Accessed 1 March 2010 at <http://www.cael.org>